

ABSTRACT

Apparatus for feeding sheets and other flat articles, especially with varying thickness, or from stacks of varying height, includes a device called a prompter. The prompter (136) comprises a body (137), a drive roller (142), mounted on and driven by shaft (135), an opposing idler roller (141), and a ribbed belt (138) stretched around the rollers. The body pivots about shaft (135) at the driven roller end. The prompter may alternatively feed articles from a stack to a singulator or other device, or it may comprise the driver of a singulator. A prompter (136), used as driver, combines with a retarder (120), called a dancer, to form a singulator (133). The dancer moves back and forth along the article flow path (121), responsive to thickness of articles, or to pull force on an article by a downstream takeaway device, to thereby automatically adjust the gap at the nip (144) of the singulator.

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